

Renfrewshire Council

Housing Repairs Policy

January 2013

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1. Introduction

This policy sets out the service provided by Renfrewshire Council for repairs to council houses to ensure that our properties are maintained to a safe and suitable standard.

The policy explains:

- the repairs that we, the Council, are responsible for
- your responsibilities as a tenant
- the different categories of repairs and their response times
- how to report repairs

There are 5 different categories of repairs covered by this policy:

- Emergency repairs
- Urgent and appointable repairs
- Cyclical maintenance
- Programmed repairs
- Planned replacement works

Each category is described in more detail in the following pages.

2. Responsibility for repairs

Our responsibilities as your landlord

As your landlord, the Council has a legal duty to repair and maintain your property.

We will carry out certain repairs to your property to ensure it is maintained to a safe standard – the type of repairs we are responsible for includes:

- the structure of your home (chimney, roof, walls, floors and stairs);
- external fabric (windows, gutters, downpipes, external doors)
- the plumbing system (including the water tank, pipe work and stopcocks);
- heating and hot water systems;
- gas pipes, electrical wiring, sockets, light fittings, switches and hard wired smoke detectors;
- kitchen and bathroom fittings (including cupboards, worktops, toilet, bath and basin)
- doors and surrounds inside your home (including skirting boards and internal doors)
- boundary walls and fences, paths, drains
- bin areas and the poles supporting washing lines

If you live in a flat, or in a sheltered housing scheme, we will also repair and maintain:

- door entry systems
- hallways and shared areas (including launderettes provided by us)
- lifts and staircases
- paths, fences and areas around the estate

We will also:

- carry out repairs in a reasonable time. When you report a repair, we will tell you what category of repair it is and where possible we will make an appointment with you for the work to be carried out or to be inspected
- make every effort not to damage any decor and to disrupt you as little as possible when carrying out the repair
- clear up after carrying out the repair
- adhere to Right to Repair legislation and pay compensation under the scheme if we fail to meet the targets (see Section 11)

Your responsibilities as our tenant

As a tenant, you are responsible for minor repairs such as:

- repairing any minor fixtures and fittings such as curtain rails, light bulbs and plugs
- small repairs like replacing keys and fitting extra locks
- maintaining internal decoration
- maintaining / replacing floor coverings supplied in kitchens and bathrooms as part of our investment programme
- maintaining / replacing shower curtains supplied in bathrooms as part of our investment programme
- television aerials and reception equipment (except in multi storey flats and sheltered housing complexes)

You must also:

- tell us as soon as possible about any damage or repairs needed to your home or related communal areas and take action to prevent further damage once a fault has been identified
- take care of your home, including carrying out minor repairs and decoration work as described above
- allow reasonable access for work to be carried out in your home
- tell us as soon possible about any alterations you wish to carry out in your home and get our permission before they are carried out.
- report any criminal damage or vandalism to your home to us and the police, and always remember to get a crime reference number
- When you move out of your house, you must leave it in a clean and tidy condition

You are also responsible for repairs which have been caused by misuse, neglect or damage by you, your family or any visitors to your home. If we repair this damage, you will be responsible for paying the cost of these repairs. See section 5 for more information on Rechargeable Repairs.

3. Reporting repairs

You can report repairs to us by telephone or online.

By phone

- Phone the Repair Line on **0300 300 0300** (24 hours)
- Use the freephone Repairs Direct telephone in the Johnstone and Renfrew Neighbourhood Offices and the Paisley Customer Service Centre

Online

- Fill in an online repairs request at www.renfrewshire.gov.uk

When you contact us to report a repair, you will be given an appointment for the repair to be completed by a tradesperson or, if the repair needs to be inspected first, a visit from a repairs officer will be arranged.

Appointments are available Monday – Friday and our appointment options are flexible. You can choose from the following timeslots:

8am – 1pm, 10am – 3pm, 12.30pm – 4.30pm or all day.

In deciding the timescales for carrying out repairs, we will take into account your individual circumstances. For example, where a member of your household is vulnerable due to age or disability, it may be possible to carry out the repair more quickly than the standard timescales.

4. Different types of repairs and their response times

There are 4 different categories of day to day repairs – emergency, urgent, appointable and programmed repairs – each one is described [here](#).

Emergency repairs

An emergency repair is classed as one where there is a threat to health and safety or where we need to take quick action to prevent damage to your home or a neighbouring property.

Some examples are:

- front door not secure
- burst water or heating pipe
- no electricity
- carbon monoxide alarm sounding

Emergency repairs will be attended to and made safe within one day of being reported and, where possible, we will carry out the full repair. If this is not possible, we may carry out temporary repairs immediately to make the situation safe, and then return to complete the repair.

Emergency repairs out with normal working hours (out-of-hours emergencies)

Some emergency repairs are available 24 hours a day, every day of the year. Emergency repairs will be attended to out with normal working hours only when:

- there is a **serious** risk to health and safety
- there is a **serious** risk to the structure of the property
- the property is not secure

If you wish to report an **out-of-hours emergency repair**, you should telephone **0300 300 0300**. If the repair does not qualify as an out-of-hours emergency

because it does not require immediate attention, you will be given an appointment for the repair to be carried out the following day.

Urgent repairs

Repairs which are not emergencies, but which need to be carried out quickly to prevent more damage to your home. These repairs will be carried out within 5 working days of being reported. Some examples are:

- minor leaks and overflows
- damaged flooring and tiles
- faulty showers

Appointable repairs

Every day repairs which are required as a result of normal wear and tear of the property. These repairs will be carried out within 15 working days of being reported. Some examples are:

- blocked rainwater pipes and gutters
- faulty radiators
- faulty electrical switch or light pendant

If you are unable to keep an appointment, please let us know on 0300 300 0300 and we will be happy to arrange an alternative appointment to suit you. If you do not notify us that you are unable to keep an appointment and we attend to carry out the repair and do not get access to your home, the repair request will normally be cancelled.

Factors affecting repair timescales

The repair timescales set out in Section 4 may vary following exceptionally poor weather. In these circumstances, we will let you know when you report repairs that exceptional weather delays are occurring and indicate when a repair will be completed.

If a repair requires parts or materials that must be ordered, the repair may not be completed within the usual timescale. If this is the case, we will let you know when it is likely to be completed.

Programmed Repairs

These are day to day repairs which are our responsibility but which don't fall into the categories of emergency or appointment repairs.

Generally these are non-urgent general maintenance repairs and many of these jobs will involve renewing items, working at height or common repairs involving owners.

There can be instances where it is of benefit to carry out some repairs (particularly larger scale repairs) on a programmed basis rather than carrying out individual responsive repairs.

Some types of responsive repairs may therefore be included in programmed repairs, for example where:

- more than one property requires the same type of repair
- the value or volume of the work means that a programmed approach would achieve better value for money than a series of responsive repairs
- larger rot work repairs are required

We will inspect all jobs which fall into this category before we programme the work. The length of time to complete programmed repairs will vary dependent on the volume and type of work required, but generally we would hope to complete these works within approximately three months.

5. Rechargeable repairs

You are responsible for any damage that you, your family or any visitors to your home have caused. If we carry out a repair for such damage, you will be asked to pay for it. We will give you an estimate for the repair, including an administration charge. If you cannot afford to pay it at once, we can arrange for it to be paid in instalments.

If you believe the damage was caused by vandalism, you must report the matter to the police and get a crime reference number.

For more information on rechargeable repairs, please refer to the Rechargeable Repairs Policy available from www.renfrewshire.gov.uk

6. Cyclical maintenance

Cyclical maintenance covers the regular maintenance of a property to ensure it is kept in good condition. This type of work is planned at regular defined intervals and some examples and our target timescales are:

- annual gas servicing and carbon monoxide testing – every year (see section 11 for more information)
- gutter cleaning – 5 years
- painting of common closes and external doors – 10 years
- servicing of door entry systems – 2 years

As this type of work mainly involves common parts of buildings, participation of owners is essential to delivery of these works. We will work with owners to encourage their participation in cyclical maintenance programmes where possible.

7. Planned improvements

Planned improvements make sure that major elements are replaced just before they would require significant repairs, ensuring that the quality of our houses remain at a high standard. A programme of major investment is currently underway to make sure all our houses meet the Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS) by 2015.

The SHQS sets out the standard for acceptable, modern, good quality housing and all social landlords in Scotland (councils and housing associations) have to meet the SHQS by 2015. Our investment programme to meet the SHQS includes the installation of new kitchens and bathrooms, electrical rewiring and replacement heating systems where required as well as external improvement works to roofs, roughcast, gutters and downpipes etc.

Once this investment programme is complete, we will ensure our houses are maintained to a high standard through a programme of planned improvements which will ensure the replacement of components which have reached the end of their useful life.

Some examples of the type of work this includes and the target timescales for replacement are:

- kitchens – 20 years
- bathrooms – 30 years
- central heating boilers – 15 years
- windows and external doors – 30 years

8. Access to carry out repairs

We offer appointments to carry out repairs at a time to suit you. If you do not allow us access to carry out repairs, and we have taken every step to agree a time to carry out the work that suits us both, we may need to take legal action in certain circumstances to allow us access to your home.

We will make sure that, where possible, repairs are completed in one visit to your home and are carried out to a high standard to ensure a 'right first time' service. If the repair cannot be completed in one visit, we will agree an appointment to return and complete the work.

When visiting your home about a repair, Council staff will always carry and show formal identification. Always check staffs' identity cards before allowing them into your home. **If the person calling does not have identification, do not allow them into your home.**

On occasions, work can be carried out by contactors working on behalf of the Council. **They will not have Council identity cards, but will be able to produce their own company's identity cards and you will have been told beforehand of the name of the company carrying out your repair on behalf of the Council.**

Council staff and contractors working on our behalf when visiting or working in your home will:

- be tidily dressed or wearing a uniform
- introduce themselves and show identification before entering your home
- explain the nature of work and keep you informed about the progress of the repair
- take care to minimise disruption and protect your home and belongings from damage, dust and paint
- follow Health and Safety requirements and make sure materials and tools do not cause danger
- be polite and courteous at all times
- not smoke, play radios or use your facilities without your permission
- remove all work-related rubbish from your house, tidy up after completing work and make sure essential services are connected at the end of each day.

Following completion of your repair, you may receive a telephone call from us to ensure you are satisfied with the quality of work carried out and the service you received. Please help us improve our service by taking part in this short telephone survey.

9. Common repairs

Responsibility for repairs and maintenance of common areas within flats is shared between all the owners. Common areas include parts such as roofs, external walls, gutters, close and stair areas.

Where cyclical maintenance or programmed repair works are required in common parts of buildings, the majority of owners need to agree to contribute to the cost of these works to allow them to be carried out.

The Tenements (Scotland) Act 2004 details how a majority decision is reached. Where common repairs are required, we will work with owners to encourage them to participate in any proposed cyclical, programmed or external improvement works in compliance with the Tenements (Scotland) Act 2004, however, this can cause delays in work being carried out to Council owned properties, particularly where the Council is not the majority owner in the building.

10. Gas Safety Checks

By law the Council is responsible for carrying out annual gas services and other safety checks. As your landlord, we have a legal obligation to ensure our gas appliances (gas fires or gas central heating installed by us) and flues are maintained in a safe manner.

We service our gas appliances every year to keep them in good working order and safe for your use. Unsafe systems are dangerous and can have potentially fatal consequences, so it is very important that you allow us access to your home so that we can carry out these essential checks.

In order that we can carry out the gas safety service, we will:

- write to you two months in advance letting you know your gas service is due to be carried out
- ask that you contact us to make an appointment at a time and date that suits you

Remember – by law you must allow us access to your home so we can carry out the gas safety check.

- if you don't allow us access, we will have to arrange forced entry to your home and you will have to pay any costs, such as repairs to the door.

If you wish to install your own gas fire, gas central heating or water-heating appliance you must get written permission in order that we then maintain and service it. Any such gas appliances will become the property of the council at the end of your tenancy.

When carrying out gas safety checks, we will shut down any unsafe gas appliances that we have no responsibility to maintain.

To request permission to install your own gas appliance write to;

Housing Maintenance Client Team
Housing and Property Services
9 Clark Street
PAISLEY
PA3 1RX

11. Your Right to repair

The Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 gives you, as a tenant, the right to have small urgent repairs carried out within a given timescale. The Right to Repair scheme covers certain repairs up to the value of £350 - if we do not carry out the repair within the set timescale, you may be entitled to compensation.

To qualify for the Right to Repair scheme, the repair must:

- have an estimated value of less than £350
- be included in the table on page 15

If we do not start the repair within the set timescale you have the right to arrange for an alternative contractor from our approved list of contractors to carry out the repair. You cannot use a contractor who is not on the Council's approved list.

If we fail to carry out a qualifying repair within the maximum time allowed, you will be entitled to £15 compensation. You will then be entitled to a further £3 per day for every day the repair remains outstanding, up to a maximum of £100.

The Right to Repair does not apply if:

- the repair has an estimated value of £350 or more
- you miss your appointment for inspection or for the repair to be carried out
- the date for repair was extended due to your requires for an alternative appointment for repair work

Qualifying repairs for Right to Repair

The timescales shown below are the maximum period in working days from the day after you report a qualifying repair or inspection (excluding weekends and public holidays)

Fault	Maximum time for completion in working days (Compensation may be payable if the time in this column is exceeded)
Blocked flue to open fire or boiler	1
Blocked or leaking foul drains, soil stacks, or toilet pans where there is no other toilet in the house	1
Blocked sink, bath or basins	1
Electric power- loss of electric power	1
partial loss of electric power	3
Insecure external window, door or lock	1
Unsafe access path or step	1
Significant leaks or flooding from water or heating pipes, tanks, cisterns	1
Loss or partial loss of gas supply	1
Loss or partial loss of hot water and/or heating where no alternative heating is available	1
Toilet not flushing where there is no other toilet in the house	1
Unsafe power or lighting socket or electrical fitting	1
Water supply- loss of water supply	1
partial loss of water supply	3
Loose or detached banister or hand rail	3
Unsafe timber flooring or stair treads	3
Mechanical extractor fan in internal kitchen or bathroom not working and no alternative ventilation	7

12. Customer Satisfaction and Complaints

We are committed to providing a quality repairs service and want to make sure you are satisfied with work carried out in your home. If our service does not meet the standard expected, it is important that you let us know as quickly as possible so that we can put things right.

If for any reason you are not satisfied with the service you have received, you can let us know through any of the methods via which repairs can be reported (see section 3). We can normally solve problems quickly and easily at this stage. However, if you are still unhappy with our service, you can make a formal complaint by completing the online complaints form available on the council website www.renfrewshire.gov.uk.

Our Customer Service Team will then investigate your complaint and, where appropriate, correct the problem and take steps to make sure it does not happen again and let you know the outcome of your complaint.

13. Equalities

We are committed to promoting equal opportunities throughout all of our services. We aim to:

- promote inclusive communities where people can live free from discrimination or harassment; and
- eliminate unlawful or unfair forms of discrimination

There will be no discrimination in the implementation of this policy on the ground of race, gender, age, sexual orientation, religion or belief, or social or financial status.

14. Involving and consulting with customers

We recognise how important it is to work in partnership with our customers to develop and continually improve our services and raise our standards.

We actively involve customers in our decision-making processes and make sure they can participate by supporting Tenant and Resident Associations, setting up housing forums and other consultation bodies. More information about how you can become involved in shaping services is available in our Customer Engagement Strategy.